

The Pied Piper of Hamelin

by
Robert Browning.



ILLUSTRATED BY
KATE GREENAWAY

The Pied Piper of Hamelin

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THE PIED PIPER

OF

HAMELIN

BY

ROBERT BROWNING

WITH 35 ILLUSTRATIONS

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KATE GREENAWAY

Introduction

The Pied Piper of Hamelin is a narrative poem for children written by Robert Browning in 1842. Some forty four years later, the poet was approached by illustrator Kate Greenaway, who requested permission to illustrate a new edition of his classic work. Browning's clever verses provided Greenaway with a firm foundation on which to display her talents. Greenaway chose a Pre-Raphaelite style and her illustrations brought new life to an old verse.

Published in London and New York by George Routledge and Sons in 1888, Greenaway's Pied Piper met with immediate success on both sides of the ocean. American and British critics alike hailed it as her very best work, acknowledging that no other illustrator could have done justice to the picturesque humor of Browning's work. Attesting to the perfect marriage of text and illustration, Greenaway's ethereal watercolors continue to delight readers more than 100 years after their first publication.

-- Dee Jones

A Note on This Edition

This book is part of a series that ipicturebooks has created to republish classic illustrated children's books in electronic form. It contains the complete original text and illustrations. We have made no changes to spelling or punctuation. However, this is not a facsimile edition. In the original edition, the text of the poem appears twice, unillustrated first, and then illustrated. For this edition, we have moved the unillustrated poem to the end of the book. We have also added the introduction above, and information about Kate Greenaway at the end of the book.

[An Introduction to Kate Greenaway](#)



THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

I.

HAMELIN Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.



II.

Rats!

They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,



And ate the cheeses out of the vats,



And licked the soup from the cook's own ladles,

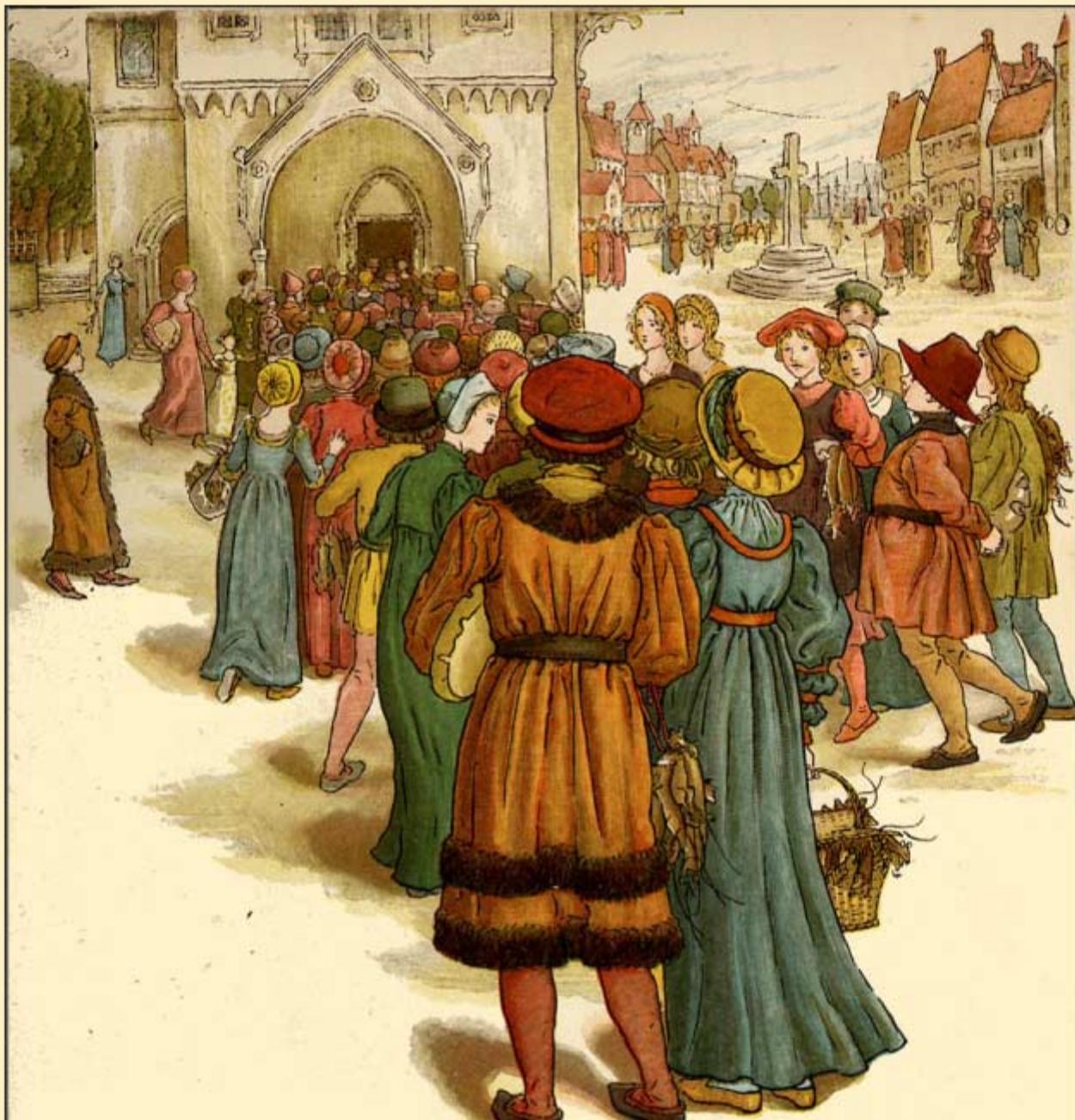


Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,





And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.



At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:
"Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
"And as for our Corporation — shocking

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

"To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
"For dolts that can't or won't determine
"What's best to rid us of our vermin!
"You hope, because you're old and obese,
"To find in the furry civic robe ease?
"Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a racking
"To find the remedy we're lacking,
"Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV.

An hour they sate in council,
At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
"I wish I were a mile hence!
"It's easy to bid one rack one's brain —
"I'm sure my poor head aches again,
"I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
"Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
"Anything like the sound of a rat
"Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

THE PIED PIPED OF HAMELIN.

V.

“Come in!” — the Mayor cried, looking bigger;
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red,
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in;
There was no guessing his kith and kin:
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one: “It’s as my great-grandsire,
“Starting up at the Trump of Doom’s tone,
“Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!”

VI.

He advanced to the council-table:
And, “Please your honours,” said he, “I’m able,
“By means of a secret charm, to draw
“All creatures living beneath the sun,
“That creep or swim or fly or run,
“After me so as you never saw!
The Pied Piper of Hamelin.
“And I chiefly use my charm
“On creatures that do people harm,
“The mole and toad and newt and viper;
“And people call me the Pied Piper.”
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same cheque;



And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers they noticed were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)

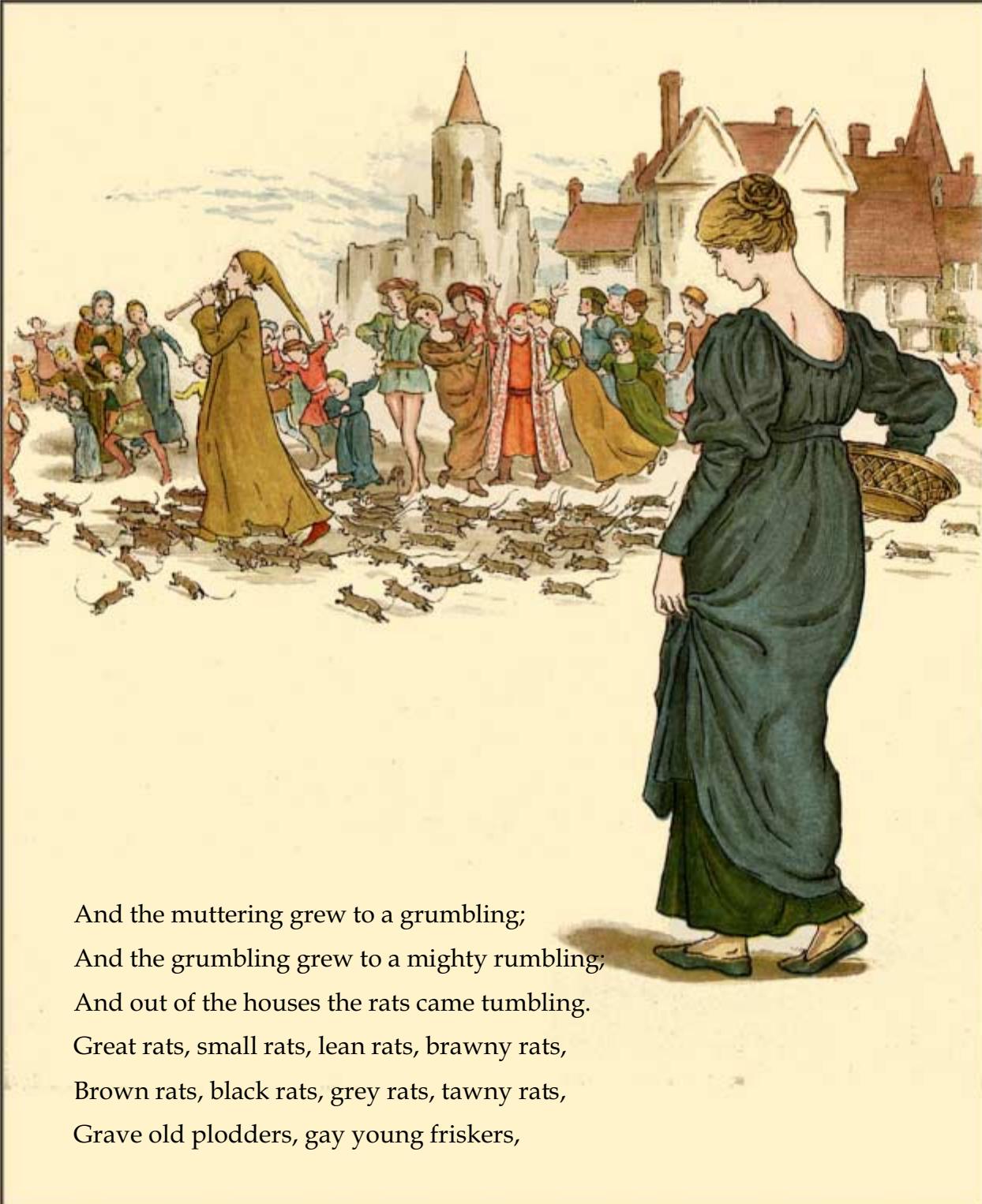


“Yet,” said he, “poor Piper as I am,
“In Tartary I freed the Cham,
“Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;
“I eased in Asia the Nizam
“Of a monstrous brood of vampyre-bats;
“And as for what your brain bewilders,
“If I can rid your town of rats
“Will you give me a thousand guilders?”
“One? fifty thousand!” – was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.



VII.

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept.
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;



And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives –
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser
Wherein all plunged and perished!
—Save one who, stout as Julius Caesar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary:
Which was, “At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
“I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
“And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
“Into a cider-press’s gripe:
“And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
“And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
“And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
“And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks:
“And it seemed as if a voice
“(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
“Is breathed) called out, ‘Oh rats, rejoice!
“The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
“So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
“Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!
“And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
“All ready staved, like a great sun shone
“Glorious scarce an inch before me,
“Just as methought it said, ‘Come, bore me!’
“—I found the Weser rolling o’er me.”



VIII.

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles,
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!"



“Consult with carpenters and builders,
“And leave in our town not even a trace
“Of the rats !” —when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, “First, if you please, my thousand guilders!”

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

IX.

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue
So did the Corporation too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow
"Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
"We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
"And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
"So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
"From the duty of giving you something to drink,
"And a matter of money to put in your poke;
"But as for the guilders, what we spoke
"Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
"Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
"A thousand guilders ! Come, take fifty !"

X.

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
"I've promised to visit by dinner-time
"Bagdad, and accept the prime



KC

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

"Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
"For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
"Of a nest of scorpions no survivor:
"With him I proved no bargain-driver,
"With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
"And folks who put me in a passion
"May find me pipe after another fashion."

XI.

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d' ye think I brook
"Being worse treated than a Cook?
"Insulted by a lazy ribald
"With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
"You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst.
"Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

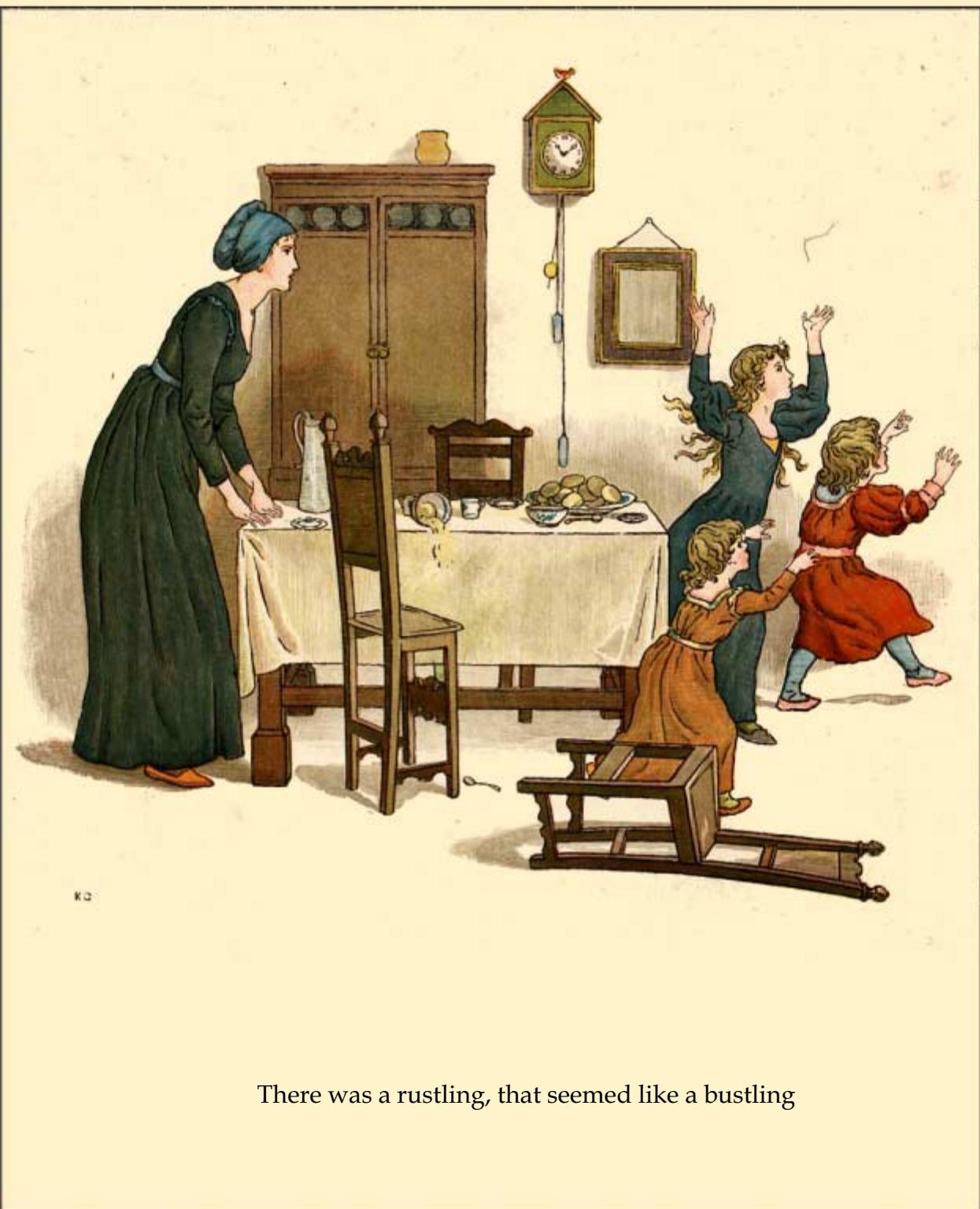
XII.

Once more he stept into the street,
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air)



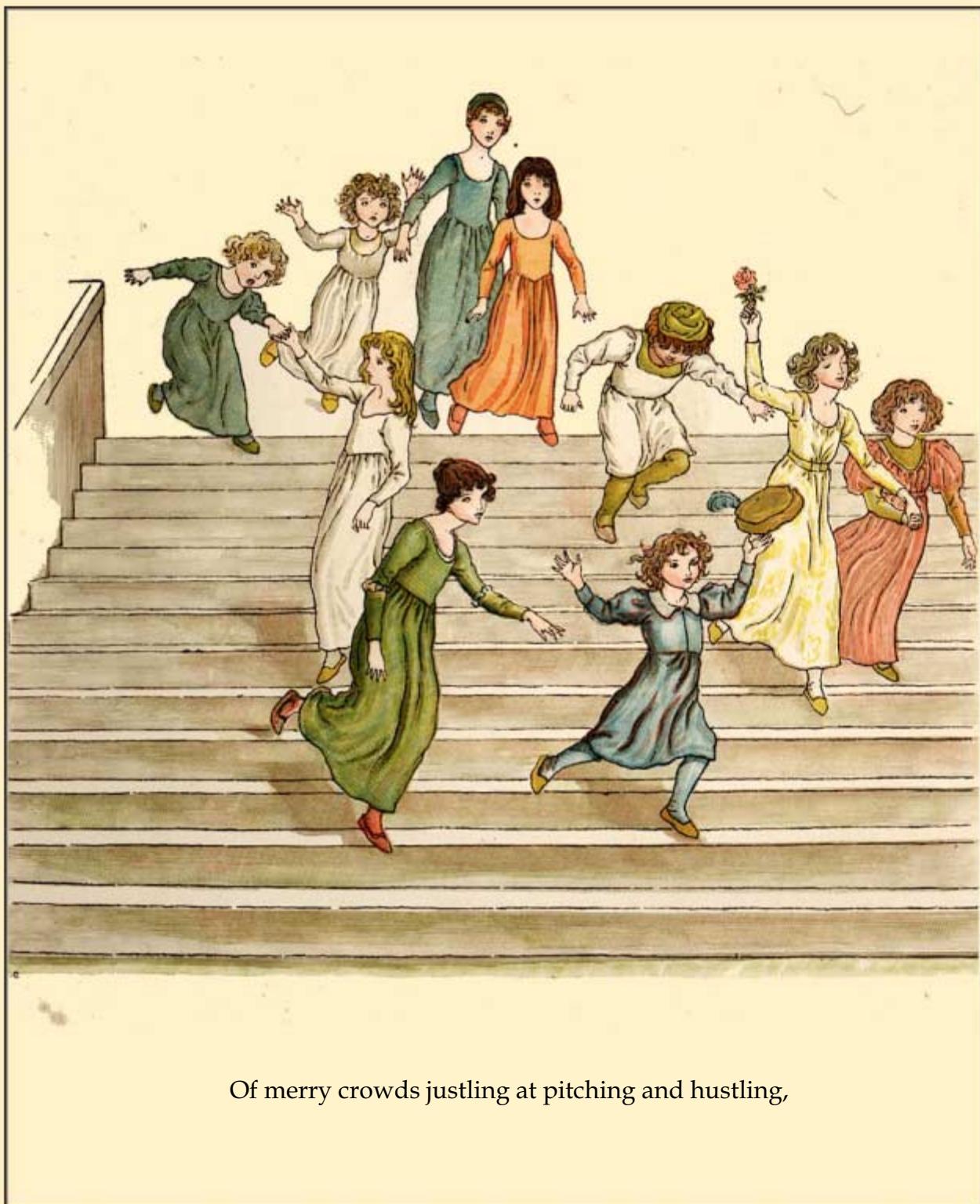






There was a rustling, that seemed like a bustling



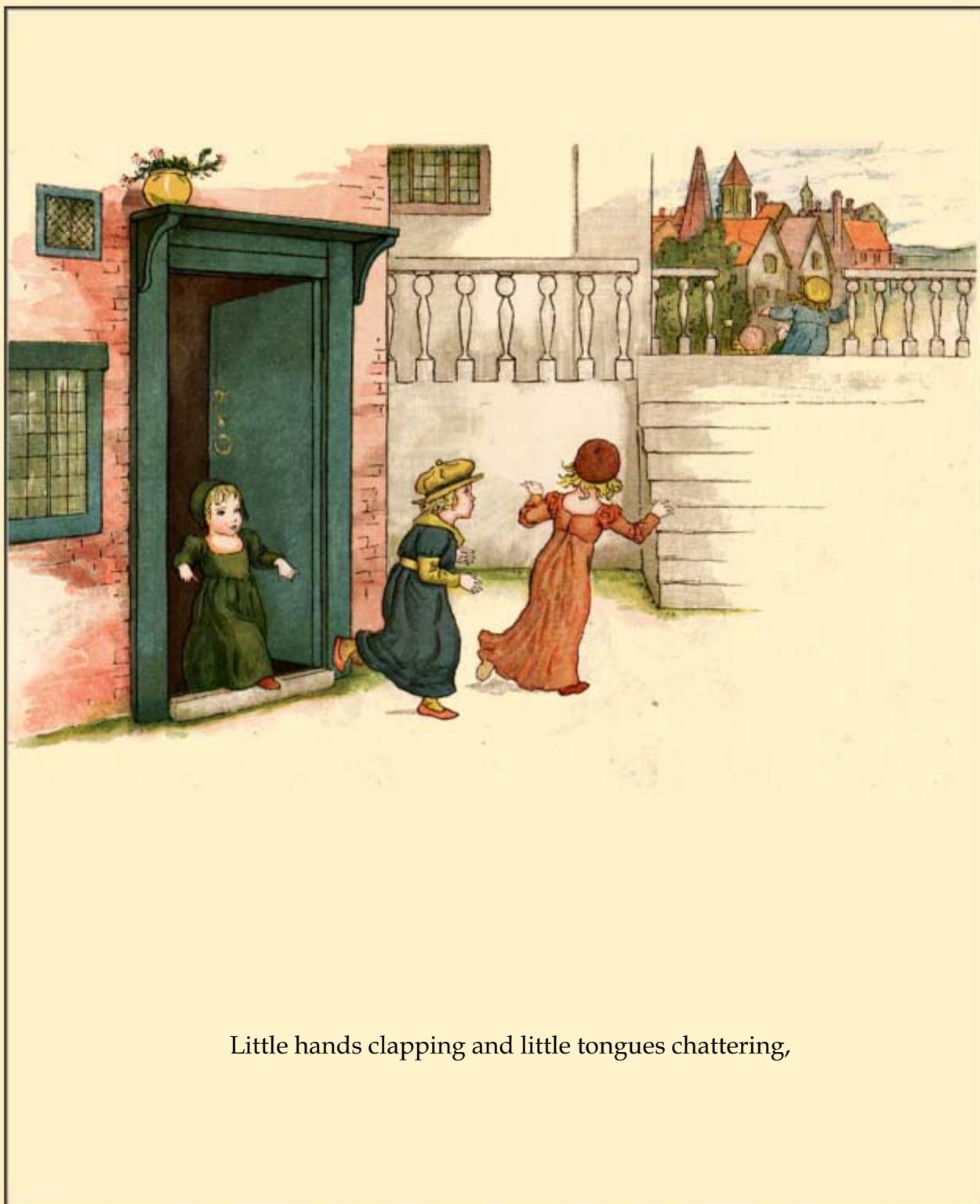


Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,



xx

Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,



Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,



And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,



Out came the children running.





All the little boys and girls.





With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,



And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,



Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after



The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.



XIII.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

— Could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hiil his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was (he joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
"He's forced to let the piping drop,
"And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say, all ? No ! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
"I can't forget that I'm bereft
"Of all the pleasant sights they see,
"Which the Piper also promised me.
"For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
"Joining the town and just at hand,



THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

"Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
"And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
"And everything was strange and new;
"The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
"And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
"And honey-bees had lost their stings,
"And horses were born with eagles' wings;
"And just as I became assured
"My lame foot would be speedily cured,
"The music stopped and I stood still,
"And found myself outside the hill,
"Left alone against my will,
"To go now limping as before,
"And never hear of that country more!"

XIV.

Alas, alas for Hamelin!

There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says that Heaven's gate
Opes to the rich at as easy rate

As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North, and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never



THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
 "On the Twenty-second of July,
"Thirteen hundred and seventy-six :"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat.
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor.
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
 To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
 They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church-window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away,
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people that ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.



XV.

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men — especially pipers
And, whether they pipe us free from rats or
from mice.
If we've promised them aught, let us keep
our promise!

The Pied Piper of Hamelin.

I.

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By famous Hanover city;
 The river Weser, deep and wide,
 Washes its wall on the southern side;
 A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
 Almost five hundred years ago,
 To see the townsfolk suffer so
 From vermin, was a pity.

II.

Rats!
They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
 And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
 And licked the soup from the cook's
 own ladles,

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Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
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 With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

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At last the people in a body
 To the Town Hall came flocking:
"Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
 "And as for our Corporation — shocking
"To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
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"It's easy to bid one rack one's brain –
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"I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
"Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
"Anything like the sound of a rat
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And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
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And he himself was tall and thin,
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And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
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There was no guessing his kith and kin:
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one: “It’s as my great-grandsire,
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“And I chiefly use my charm
“On creatures that do people harm,
“The mole and toad and newt and viper;
“And people call me the Pied Piper.”
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same cheque;
And at the scarf’s end hung a pipe;
And his fingers they noticed were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
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And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
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Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.

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—Save one who, stout as Julius Caesar,
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““The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
““So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
““Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!”

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“And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
“All ready staved, like a great sun shone
“Glorious scarce an inch before me,
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“Consult with carpenters and builders,
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Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
"So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something to drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
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Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
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 And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
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Soft notes as yet musician’s cunning
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Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

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As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
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To the children merrily skipping by,
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That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!

The Pied Piper of Hamelin.

However he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was (the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
"He's forced to let the piping drop,
"And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
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And when all were in to the very last,
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Did I say, all ? No ! One was lame,
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His sadness, he was used to say,—
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"Of all the pleasant sights they see,
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A text which says that Heaven’s gate
Opes to the rich at as easy rate

As the needle’s eye takes a camel in!

The Mayor sent East, West, North, and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,

The Pied Piper of Hamelin.

Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
 And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
 Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
 "On the Twenty-second of July,
"Thirteen hundred and seventy-six :"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor,
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
 To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
 They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church-window painted

The Pied Piper of Hamelin.

The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away,
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people that ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

XV.

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers!
And, whether they pipe us free from rats or
from mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep
our promise!

KATE GREENAWAY

At the time of her birth, March 18, 1846, Kate Greenaway's family lived at 1 Cavendish Street in Hoxton, London. By 1848, after the bankruptcy of her father's employer, they moved to the grim, dirty suburb of Islington, in London's East End. Here, her mother ran a successful dress shop, and by 1852, her father had opened a new business, engraving cuts for *The Illustrated London News* and working for printer Edmund Evans. In order to escape the harsh realities of city life, Kate often visited her mother's family in the serene countryside of Rolleston in Nottingham. These early days spent in the country had an enormous impact upon the young Kate and would surface much later in her drawings.

John Greenaway was quick to spot artistic talent in his young daughter. After years of study at various art schools, a Greenaway illustration appeared as the frontispiece in *Infant Amusements* by William H. G. Kingston, published in 1867. The next year saw the beginning of her professional affiliation with the Marcus Ward Company. After proving her marketability with a Valentine design, Greenaway created hundreds of cards filled with flowers, fairies, and children. The designs that made her reputation at Marcus Ward were a series of cards showing children dressed in historical costume, placed against plain backgrounds with ornate gold trimmed borders.

Throughout the 1870s, Greenaway's illustrations appeared in numerous periodicals and she was commissioned by her father's employer, Cassell, Petter, and Galpin to illustrate a number of books, including *My School Days in Paris*, *A Child's Influence*, and *The Children of the Parsonage*. Kate's career flourished and her father introduced her to his friend, Edmund Evans, whose color printing and engraving business was responsible for the production of most of the full color children's toy books in Britain. Evans was already aware of Greenaway's greeting card designs and saw promise in the book of drawings that she brought for his approval. Evans agreed to purchase the book outright and they agreed to a title - *Under the Window*, taken from one of the verses penned by Greenaway.

After a number of delays, *Under the Window* was published by Routledge in 1879 and brought Greenaway immediate fame and fortune. She earned £800 the first year, with domestic and foreign sales reaching a staggering 100,000 copies. Within months of its publication, a variety of spinoff items were produced and the Greenaway style was born. There were *Under the Window* inspired bookmarks, advertising cards, metal buttons, fabric, wallpaper, embroidered handkerchiefs, and sheet music.

The team of Evans, Greenaway, and Routledge produced a number of books, including *Kate Greenaway's Birthday Book for Children*, *A Day in a Child's Life*, *Mother Goose*, and *Little Ann*. In 1882, they collaborated on the first of a series of Almanacks published from 1883-1897. The first Almanack was followed by *Language of Flowers*;

Marigold Garden, considered to be the high point of Greenaway's career; *A Apple Pie; The Pied Piper of Hamelin*; and finally, *The April Baby's Book of Tunes* in 1900.

Since her death in 1901, the allure of the Kate Greenaway vogue has been scrutinized, analyzed, and studied in a multitude of books, dissertations, scholarly journals, magazines, and exhibitions. The realization of Greenaway's important contributions to the history of children's book illustration is not limited to her contemporaries of 19th century England. In 1955, the British Library Association established the Kate Greenaway Medal, presented annually to the artist living and publishing in Great Britain who has produced the most distinguished work in the illustration of children's books, an award similar to the American Library Association's Caldecott Medal.

You might enjoy some of these other titles illustrated by Kate Greenaway:

Mother Goose (1881)

Little Ann (1882)

Kate Greenaway Almanacks (annually from 1883-1897, except 1986)

Language of Flowers (1884)

Marigold Garden (1885)

Kate Greenaway's Alphabet (1885)

A Apple Pie (1886)

Kate Greenaway's Book of Games (1889)

April Baby's Book of Tunes (1900)

The Pied Piper of Hamelin is a classic narrative poem for children written by Robert Browning in 1842. Since that time, it has appeared in many poetry anthologies and picture books. In 1888, Edmund Evans printed a version with illustrations by Kate Greenaway, considered by her friend and critic, John Ruskin, to be her best work. Ruskin's view was obviously shared by others since this version is still in print, more than 100 years later. This historic poem has also been illustrated by other prominent artists including Arthur Rackham, Harold Jones, Roger Duvoisin, Charles Robinson, and Hope Dunlap.